

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ACCRA 03975 190936Z
ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 3975

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDIP, PGOV, GH
SUBJECT: NEW GHANAIAN AMBASSADOR TO UN JOSEPH EMMANUEL APPIAH

REF: 77 ACCRA 4524

1. SUMMARY: THE OFF-AGAIN, ON-AGAIN APPOINTMENT OF JOE APPIAH AS GHANAIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UN IS NOW FIRM. HE HAS BEEN DIRECTED BY HEAD OF STATE ACHEAMPONG TO TAKE UP HIS DUTIES IN NEW YORK BY THE END OF JUNE. APPIAH IS NOW OUT OF FAVOR WITH ACHEAMPONG BECAUSE OF HIS FAILURE TO TURN OUT A MASSIVE "YES" VOTE IN THE MARCH REFERENDUM. APPIAH IS UNHAPPY, AS IS THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA), WITH THE UN APPOINTMENT, AND HE PROBABLY REGARDS IT AS A MILD FORM OF EXILE. USUN OFFICERS WILL FIND HIM INTERESTING AND APPROACHABLE BUT WE DOUBT HE WILL HAVE MUCH CLOUT WITH HIS OWN GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY..

2. ERIC OTOO, SENIOR PRINCIPAL SECRETARY IN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOLD ME MAY 15 THAT AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO THE UN JOE APPIAH WILL BE ASSUMING HIS DUTIES IN NEW YORK BY THE END OF JUNE. APPIAH HAD BEEN APPOINTED TO THE POST AS PART OF A MAJOR
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GOVERNMENT RE-SHUFFLE IN JUNE,. 1977 (REFTEL), BUT HE MANAGED AT THE TIME TO CONVINCE ACHEAMPONG THAT HE COULD BE BETTER UTILIZED IN ACCRA TO HELP PUSH FOR UNION GOVERNMENT. SINCE VOTER TURNOUT AT THE REFERENDUM WAS LOW AND UNION GOVERNMENT WAS ENDORSED BY ONLY A NARROW MARGIN, AND SINCE APPIAH WAS UNABLE TO DELIVER EVEN HIS OWN HOME AREA OF KUMASI, HE IS NOW OUT OF FAVOR WITH ACHEAMPONG, WHO IS REMOVING HIM FROM THE SCENE

BY ORDERING HIM TO TAKE UP HIS DUTIES IN NEW YORK. OTOO TOLD ME THAT ACHEAMPONG HAD TAKEN THIS ACTION WHILE HE AND COMMISSIONER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS FELLI WERE OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

3. I HAVE NOT SEEN APPIAH IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS (HE HAS BEEN LYING LOW SINCE THE REFERENDUM), BUT EARLIER CONVERSATIONS WITH HIM MADE IT CLEAR HE IS NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE UN JOB. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, HOWEVER, HE PROBABLY NOW HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO GO TO NEW YORK. SENIOR MFA OFFICIALS ARE ALSO UNHAPPY WITH HIS APPOINTMENT. THEY SEE HIM AS AN UNSCRUPULOUS, ALBEIT SHREWD, OLD-LINE POLITICIAN WHO COULD EASILY HARM GHANA'S IMAGE AT THE UN. THE PRESENT AMBASSADOR, FRANK BOATEN, IS WELL RESPECTED HERE AND IS ONE OF THE MOST SENIOR GHANAIAN FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS. OTOO TOLD ME THEY HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHERE TO PLACE BOATEN BUT WERE THINKING IN TERMS OF A "SABBATICAL" OF SOME SORT FOR HIM.

4. ALTHOUGH APPIAH HAS BEEN PERSONALLY FRIENDLY AND ON OCCASION HELPFUL TO ME AND OTHER EMBOFFS, THE WORD MOST FREQUENTLY USED TO DESCRIBE HIM IS "OPPORTUNIST." HE IS ONE OF THE OLD WAR-HORSES OF GHANAIAN POLITICS. OPPONENTS HAVE LONG ACCUSED HIM OF OPPORTUNISM AND PUBLICITY SEEKING. SMALL IN STATURE, RESTLESS, LIVELY, HARD-DRINKING, AND VAIN, HE IS AMBITIOUS BUT HAS NEVER REACHED REAL POLITICAL HEIGHTS. AN ASHANTI, HE HAS STRONG TIES IN THAT REGION SINCE HIS SISTER, VICTORIA, IS THE WIFE OF THE ASANTEHENE, GHANA'S
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MOST PRESTIGIOUS CHIEF. (BECAUSE OF THE HEAVY ANTI-UNION GOVERNMENT VOTE IN KUMASI, THE ASANTEHENE IS ALSO IN TROUBLE WITH ACHEAMPONG.)

5. APPOAH'S WIFE, PEGGY, IS THE DAUGHTER OF THE LATE SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS, UK CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER AFTER WORLD WAR II. SHE IS KNOWN TO BE OPPOSED TO THE UN APPOINTMENT, AND WE DOUBT THAT SHE WILL ACCOMPANY APPIAH TO NEW YORK.

6. APPIAH IS INTELLIGENT, ARTICULATE AND AN ENTERTAINING RACONTEUR. HE HAS BEEN IMMERSSED IN DOMESTIC POLITICS THROUGHOUT HIS ADULT LIFE AND IT REMAINS HIS FIRST LOVE. ALTHOUGH NOT PARTICULARLY KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT FOREIGN AFFAIRS, HE ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO GHANA'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND IS A FIERCELY PROUD GHANAIAN NATIONALIST. USUN OFFICERS WILL FIND HIM APPROACHABLE AND INTERESTING, BUT WE DOUBT THAT HE WILL HAVE MUCH CLOUT HERE--EITHER WITH ACHEAMPONG OR MFA.
SMITH

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NNN

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